

Letter to the Editor

Undergraduate education for sonography: a statement from BMUS

Dear Editor,

BMUS Council would like to take this opportunity to thank all participants who responded to the survey recently circulated, concerning direct entry ultrasound. The survey was compiled to obtain BMUS members' views on direct entry ultrasound education.

Since the survey was compiled and circulated, there has been much discussion regarding undergraduate ultrasound education. What has become clear is that there is confusion in the understanding of the term *direct entry ultrasound education* as opposed to *undergraduate education*. To clarify, *direct entry* is a term often used by Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to describe graduate entry courses, such as postgraduate diplomas and certificates. However, some HEIs are using the term to describe entry onto postgraduate ultrasound courses by graduates who have degrees in any subject and not necessarily in the traditional health sciences, such as radiography or midwifery.

The results of the BMUS survey have been collated and are published in this issue of *Ultrasound*. It is apparent that there is a great strength of feeling among respondents both for and against undergraduate ultrasound education, despite the survey being compiled to gain an insight into issues related to direct entry education. There is increasing pressure to look at new ways of training sonographers and BMUS is part of a larger working party reviewing the options that are available to increase the number of competent, qualified sonographers within the UK. As part of this work, BMUS, as a member organisation of CASE

(Consortium for Accreditation of Sonographic Education) has compiled a statement on undergraduate education. The aim of this statement is to highlight the key points of concern identified by BMUS members, whilst at the same time looking to support future education opportunities.

The statement is as follows:

BMUS will support undergraduate education, providing the training supports the development of competent sonographers (or ultrasound practitioners) who are eligible for employment within the current health environment. Consideration has to be given to the issues of lack of statutory registration, first post competencies required by employers and subsequent banding issues. As these issues are outwith the remit of CASE, BMUS recommends that HEIs open dialogue with local employers and clinical departments to ensure the training programmes delivered provide competent practitioners who are eligible for employment within the local health economy.

Whilst BMUS Council acknowledges the concerns raised by respondents to the survey, it is hoped that by issuing this statement, and working with other national bodies, BMUS can contribute to the development of a suitable education programme, which supports the needs of our patients and the profession as a whole.

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